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—THE—

ROLLING STONE:

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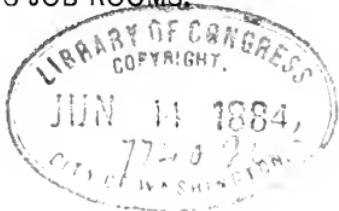
SERIES OF ORIGINAL POEMS.

BY C. RUSSELL CHRISTIAN.

HUNTINGTON:

PRINTED AT THE NEWS JOB ROOMS.

1884.



T. C. Christian

25

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C. RUSSELL CHRISTIAN.

DEDICATION

—TO—

Dr. W. P. BRYAN,

DEAR SIR:—It is with considerable solicitude that I offer a second volume to the public. And if I am unsuccessful in my attempt to add something to the literature of the day I shall at least have the consolation of having been urged to the task by one so worthy as yourself. After mature deliberation as to the extreme consequences of my rashness, I throw myself upon the tide and cry in the language of my great ideal—

“Prepare for rhyme! I’ll publish right or wrong!

I have ventured in the present instance to couple your name with my own. And if this Stone shall only roll awhile and then stop—probably in a mad attempt to roll up hill—let the blame rest on the mason who shaped its parts. But if on the contrary it increases its speed with time, and bears its burden of song to other years, let the honor belong to him whose wisdom dictated the subject of its proudest inscription.

Very respectfully yours.

C. RUSSELL CHRISTIAN.

Guyandotte, W. Va., May 19. 1884.

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—THE—

→•BUILDING•OF•THE•SHIP.←



I.

Awake—O Hand!—and strike the Lyre
To notes of love for deeds of fire!

Awake—O Lyre!—and fling the song
To every breeze that floats along!

Awake—O Heart!—inspire the strains
To sing the Union's birth and pains!

Awake—O Earth!--and hear at last
A song unheard throughout the Past!

Awake!—let every living soul
Attest the Union grand and whole!

II.

Full well we know—O ship of State!—
Why thou art held so doubly great;
Thy builders were our valiant Sires
Who felt the glow of Freedom's fires
And rushed into the wilds of earth
To rear thy glory and thy worth;

And thus through many darksome years
Poured out their blood and poured their tears.
And worked in spite of doubts and fears.
And when the mighty work was done,
And Freedom's battles fought and won,
The craft was launched upon the sea
Of dark and broad Futurity ;
And straight the Russian serf—unchained—
Fled from the land where czars had reigned ;
The German left his half-pruned vine,
And fled for aye the lordly Rhine ;
The Switzer gave a parting glance
To heights where Freedom broke her lance ;
The Spaniard tamed his thirst for gold,
And on the swelling vortex rolled ;
The English peasant fled his lord !
The Gallic warrior dropped his sword ;
And Greek—and Turk—Italian too—
And Scot—and Dane—and all who knew—
And Irishmen who love to die
Beneath the arch of Freedom's sky—
All—all—and thousand thousands more
Struck for the bright Columbian shore,
Took refuge on the ship of State—
The ship of Union—grand and great.

III.

But ere this mighty craft was built
Full many a tear of blood was spilt,

And Innocence trod down by Guilt ;
For he who does a deed of worth
Must bear the mockery of the earth !
But when the time for Freedom's birth
Was fully come—it came at last,
And with the Present shamed the Past—
The long-remembered workers came
With hearts of fire and tongues of flame.
To build the vasty ship of State—
The ship of Union—grand and great.
And so the workers set to work ;
And some were Christian—some were Turk—
And some there were who knew no faith
Of good or ill beyond the Death !
The first who came knew how to kill,
But knew no more,—had perfect skill
In tearing down, but never could
In setting up do any good.
Of these thy name is ever first,
Immortal JEFFERSON !—the worst
Destroyer known—or chief or sage—
The arch-Destroyer of the age.
'Twas thine to teach the rising land
The magic of the imperial wand,
And speak the long-expected word,
And with the goose-quill smite the Sword ;
'Twas done ; thy work was done—how well,

Let future generations tell
Who hold thy DECLARATION still
The greatest work of human skill.
And PAINE and HENRY too were found
Re-doubling havoc far around—
Wherever these Destroyers went
They slung the ax with fierce intent,
Slew good and ill and left the land
A ruined wreck on either hand.

IV.

And from this wreck of ages past
The mighty Builders came at last
To build the vasty ship of State —
The ship of Union—grand and great.
Of these—the Builders—who shall stand
To shape the work of all the band ?
Who holds the First-Mechanic's place
To give the vessel strength and grace ?
'Tis he—'t is HAMILTON !—the Sage—
Soul of the WASHINGTONIAN age—
The lamp of Law in peace and war—
And Freedom's blazing Morning-Star—
'Twas HAMILTONIAN genius gave
The vessel power to stem the wave
Upon the rugged seas which lave
The shores of isles where dwell the brave

Who love the free but scorn the slave.
And thus the building was begun--
The grandest ship beneath the Sun ;
Where'er they found a tree of worth
They hewed the shaft and hauled it forth,
But left all others strewn around
To fertilize the mellow ground.

V.

They built the keel of Freedom-wood
Which PAINE had slaughterd with the brood
Of noxious trees which round it stood ;
For PAINE--whatever may be said
In honor of the illustrious dead--
While dealing Superstition dole
Threw down this bulwark of the Soul ;
From this a lesson may be learned--
A lesson which the Past has earned--
The Freedom-tree is man's estate ;
It will not yield itself to Fate ;
If felled along the unwilling earth
Its trunk is still a source of worth,
While from its roots shall burst again
A shelter for the sons of men.
The central mast was said to be
Hewn from a tall-grown Union-tree
Which JEFFERSON had felled to earth

And passed as having little worth !
A Union-tree—the only one
Which ever grew beneath the Sun !
The deck's were Truth wood—as ye see—
The rudder was a Justice-tree—
Upon the sails was hoisted then
The “PEACE ON EARTH, GOOD-WILL TO MEN !”
'Tis done ; the mighty work is o'er
And resting on the Eastern shore—
'Tis done ; she's launched upon the sea
Of dark and broad Futurity—
Blow fair, thou ever-shifting breeze !
And waft her o'er the waves at ease !
Sail on, thou vasty ship of State !
And bards thy story shall relate !
'Tis done ; the breeze still bears her on—
And on—and on—and on—and on !
But where's the First-Mechanic gone ?—
The first—the last—the best—the One ?
The mighty genius which could rear
This structure in the desert here ?
Yea where's the voice that taught our Sires
To fan the flames of Freedom's fires
And rush into the wilds of earth
To rear the mighty Union's worth
And mark her era and her birth ?

VI.

Awake—O Hand!—and smite the Lyre!
Change notes of love to notes of fire!
Awake—O Lyre!—and fling the song
To all of boasted Honor's throng!
Awake—O Heart!—inspire the strains
To sing of Freedom's galling chains!
Awake—O Earth!—and hear at last
A curse resounding through the Past!
Awake!—let every living soul
Now deal the code of Honor dole!

[Feb. 1884.]



LIBERTY-BELL.

—:O:—

The aged bell-man sat aloft,
Revolving in his soul full oft
The varied fortunes of the band
Warring for his native land.

While in the rugged hall of State
The new-born Congress proudly sate
Advising in the face of Death
Freedom or the open heath.

Ev'n as the Sun with kindling light
Dispels the horrid dark of Night,
So Freedom when her time had come
Claimed her own Columbian home.

The great assembly gave the word
That broke the reign of George the Third;
And thousand Ages paled before
Sights they had not seen of yore.

“Ring! ring!” the small boy shouted forth;
The grand evangel shook the earth!

And shouts of Freedom broke upon
Yankee snows and Dixie's sun.

And friendly gods beheld the sight
Of Freedom's Eagle bathed in light;
And voices cried from out the Past,
"Ye shall have reward at last!"

And sires would view their children's corse,
And think of George—and think of worse—
And shout with their expiring breath,
"Give me Liberty or death!"

[Jan. 19, 1884.]



ACROSS THE RAPPAHANNOCK.

Between the camps of Blue and Gray
The Rappahannock rolled away;
Full in the view of either's face
The warriors of each anxious race
Paraded to the fierce alarms
Of music and the shock of arms
Across the Rappahannock.

Rebellion's DIXIE soared aloft
In accents never heard too oft;
The Union struck her notes of cheer—
THE SPANGLED BANNER—loud and clear;
Such were the notes that floated o'er—
O may they never do it more! —
Across the Rappahannock.

And one with heart of purer ring
Of HOME SWEET HOME began to sing;
All hearts were turned to earlier years—
All eyes were filled with bursting tears—
And Blue and Gray the chorus sang
Until the sacred music rang
Across the Rappahannock!

[Jan. 23, 1884.]

→•TOUCH•IT•NOT.•←

I.

Who sues to ALCOHOL as King?

 Touch it not!

Who dallies with his mortal sting?

 Touch it not!

Long shall he weep a flood of tears
And curse this bane of ancient Years
Where'er his odious throne appears?

 Touch it not!

Or tongue blasphemous frights his ears?

 Touch it not!

II.

I heard the voice of ancient Truth—

 Touch it not!

It scorns this living foe of Youth!

 Touch it not!

Around the throne of Ages stood
A specter wrapped in tears and blood,
And scattered forth a fiery flood—

 Touch it not!

A sateless foe of human good!

 Touch it not!

III. .

Once in his power all Virtue flies—

 Touch it not!

Drink but on HEALTH and Reason dies!

 Touch it not!

The bane that overhangs our race

Far gleaming from his ghastly face—

What tongue—what pen shall dare to trace?

 Touch it not!

His strict companion is disgrace!

 Touch it not!

IV.

He often counterfeits his name—

 Touch it not!

And yet 't is ALCOHOL the same!

 Touch it not!

He greets the laborer with a smile—

To invalids he preaches guile,

And overcomes by subtle wile!

 Touch it not!

His pleasures only last awhile!

 Touch it not!

V.

A BYRON lost his freedom there!

 Touch it not!

A POE expired beneath his care!

Touch it not!
Amid the stranded wrecks of Time
Who stands conspicuous most for crime
Still bears his forehead-brand sublime—

Touch it not!
And yet his praise is sung in rhyme!
Touch it not!

VI.

Who rises on the scale of Thought?

Touch it not!
By whom are mightiest battles fought?

Touch it not!
'Tis those who stand devoid of fear
And hurl defiance year on year,
And build—but vainly build—his bier!

Touch it not!
Why should the bacchanalian sneer?
Touch it not!

VII.

That War's an Evil none denies—
Touch it not!

But other Evils still arise—
Touch it not!
A giant Evil—greater far—
And bearing half the crimes of War

Whose voice of horror sounds afar !

 Touch it not !

He fights without a scimetar !

 Touch it not !

VIII.

His breath is like a poison dew --

 Touch it not !

It blasts the system through and through !

 Touch it not !

Since first the Arab set his still

And taught a blessing how to kill

Mankind have wrought their bane at will --

 Touch it not !

It feeds the Worm but starves the Mill !

 Touch it not !

IX.

And yet a better day will come !

 Tonch it not !

And ALCOHOL shall meet his doom !

 Touch it not !

Few tyrants known to him at birth

Remain to curse the genial Earth --

Their thrones are now the thrones of Worth !

 Touch it not !

So ALCOHOL shall falter forth !

 Touch it not !

THE WRECK OF YOUTH.

O ye who gaze upon the wrecks of Time
And weep for Troy—for Babel—or for Rome!
Think ye no victim of the tyrant Time
Invites the tear of sympathy at home?

Never did mortal gaze on wreck of Time
More fitted to inspire a love of Truth—
Never was greater conquest won by Time
Than in the ruinous overthrow of Youth!

[Feb. 2, 1882.]

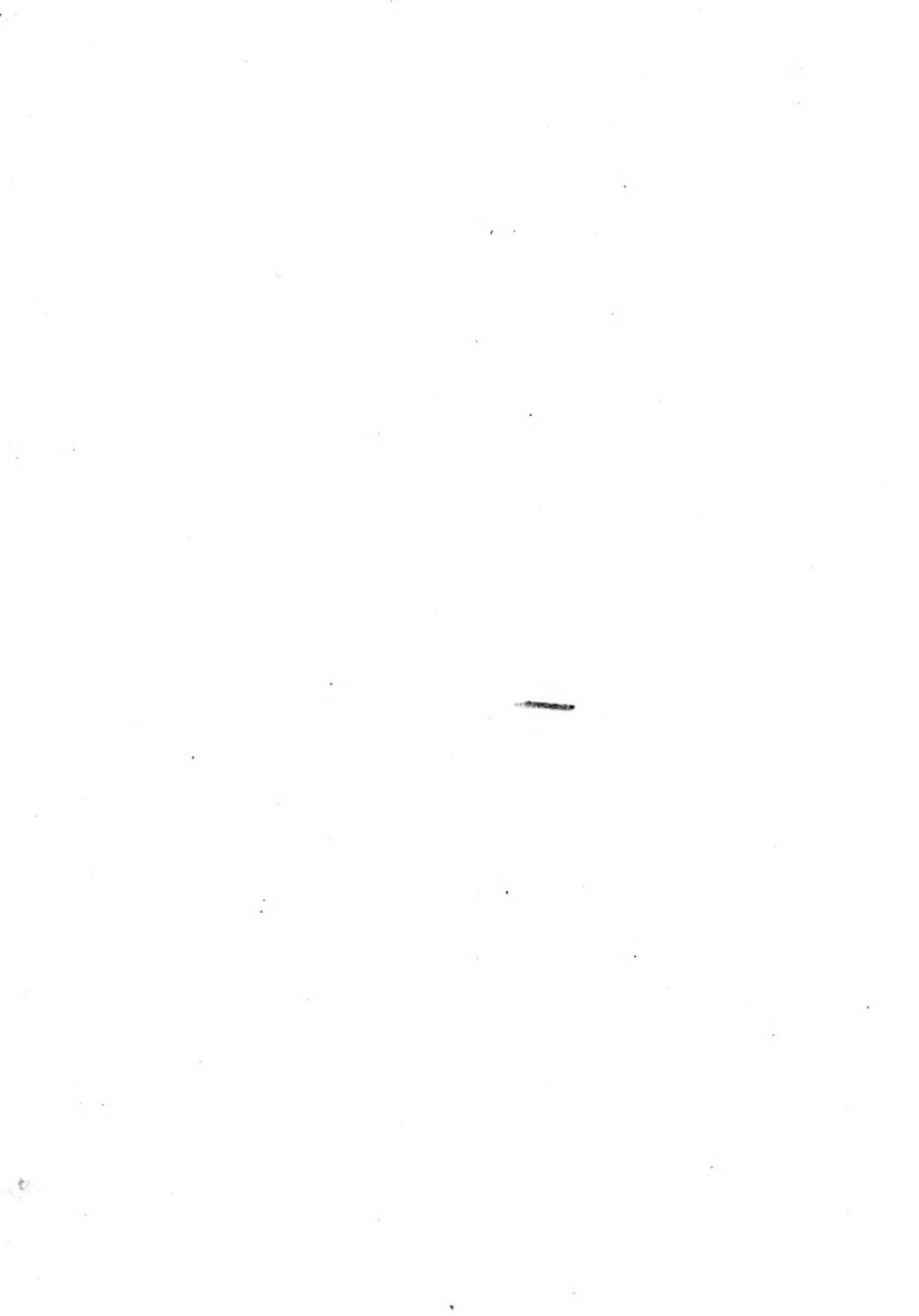


→••EPITAPHi.••←

Once in this clay resided Thought
And Life with labors overwrought—
Strong life with thousand sorrows fraught
Yet having power to hold as naught
Whatever had been wrongly taught ;
Here were the thousand battles fought,
And thousand victories dearly bought ;
Here beamed the eye that oft hath caught
Love's fiery glances as it ought—
But Life withdrew when Fortune brought
The very boon it long had sought !

[April 22, 1883.]





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